

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 00845

LIMDIS

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TAGS: MASS CG BE FR US

SUBJ: CONSULTATIONS ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS
TO ZAIRE

REF: (A) PARIS 38396, (B) BRUSSELS 00167,

(C) BRUSSELS 00186

SUMMARY: DISCUSSION WITH FRENCH OF OUR RESPECTIVE
MILITARY AID PROGRAMS FOR ZAIRE WAS MORE OPEN AND
FORTHCOMING THAN ANTICIPATED. FRENCH AGREED ON NEED
FOR MODEST ZAIRIAN MILITARY PROGRAM AS INTEGRAL
ELEMENT OF LARGER EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN STABILITY IN
CENTRAL AFRICA. THEY ALSO DISCOUNTED IMMINENT THREAT
FROM ANGOLA (WITH WHOM FRANCE WILL SHORTLY ESTABLISH
DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS - SEPTTEL)- FOREIGN OFFICE AND
MILITARY ASSISTANCE PERSONNEL WERE BLUNT IN THEIR
CRITICISM OF COMMERCIAL MIRAGE AND PANHARD PROGRAMS,
WHICH SADDLED AID OFFICIALS WITH UNWANTED HERCULEAN
TASK OF TRAINING. WHILE FRENCH ENDORSED GENERAL
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PHILOSOPHY AND APPROACH OF U.S. PROGRAM, THEY STRESSED
MAGNITUDE OF "HUMAN PROBLEM" CONFRONTING BOTH OUR
PROGRAMS, AND WERE CLEARLY CONCERNED LEST ZAIRE
OFFICIALS DIVERT PERSONNEL WHOM FRANCE HAD PAINFULLY
TRAINED ON PANHARDS TO NEWER U.S. PROGRAM. U.S.
DELEGATION EXPLOITED THIS CONCERN TO PERSUADE FRENCH OF
UTILITY OF REDUCING COMPETITION BY ESTABLISHING ARMOR-

TRAINING SCHOOL IN ZAIRE WITH CAPACITY OF TRAINING INSTRUCTORS TO MEET NEEDS OF BOTH OUR ARMORED CAR PROGRAMS. BY CONTRAST, EFFORT TO PERSUADE FRENCH TO UPGRADE KAMINA AIRBASE TO RECEIVE MIRAGES MET POLITE REFUSAL. THERE WAS OBVIOUSLY SOME OVERLAP BETWEEN FRENCH AND BELGIAN TRAINING ACTIVITY, NOTABLY IN NAVAL AREA, AND DELEGATION WAS LEFT WITH SNEAKING SUSPICION U.S. MAY HAVE TO SERVE AS HYPHEN LINKING FRENCH AND BELGIAN PROGRAMS. END SUMMARY.

1. ATMOSPHERE OF DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FRENCH WAS, IF ANYTHING, EVEN MORE INFORMAL AND BUSINESSLIKE THAN WITH BELGIANS (REF B). SINCE AFRICAN DIRECTOR, AMBASSADOR GEORGY, WAS ABSENT IN EAST AFRICA, FRENCH DELEGATION WAS HEADED BY DIRECTOR FOR FRANCOPHONE AFRICA DE LA ROCHERE, RECENTLY TRANSFERRED FROM THE ELYSEE. LACKING THE DEEP ZAIRE EXPERTISE OF LE BRUN, HE WAS MORE POSITIVE AND TO THE POINT. HE WAS ABLY SECONDED IN WRY HUMOR AND OPEN MANNER BY GENERAL DUVAL, CHIEF OF MILITARY COOPERATION PROGRAM. ALSO PRESENT WERE ZAIRE DESK OFFICER GUISTETTI AND AFRICAN BUREAU MILITARY AFFAIRS ADVISOR COLONEL QUIQUENEL.

2. THERE WERE VERY FEW POINTS OF DISAGREEMENT THROUGHOUT THE DAY'S DISCUSSION WHICH FOCUSED ESSENTIALLY ON WAYS IN WHICH THE TWO SIDES MIGHT AVOID COMPETING FOR THE SCARCEST OF ALL COMMODITIES IN ZAIRE, QUALIFIED PERSONNEL. U.S. PRESENTATION FOLLOWED CLOSELY ONE MADE IN BELGIUM AND EXPANDED ON LONG TERM MODERNIZATION
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PROGRAM, WHILE STRESSING THAT LONG TERM PROGRAM REPRESENTS A STUDY FOR PLANNING PURPOSES, I.E. THE USG HAS NOT MADE ANY COMMITMENTS BEYOND GROUND FORCE IMPACT PACKAGE. DISCUSSING ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING OUR RESPECTIVE PROGRAMS, DE LA ROCHERE AGREED WITH VIEW THAT MILITARY AID TO ZAIRE IS AN INTEGRAL PSYCHOLOGICAL ELEMENT OF A LARGER ECONOMIC/FINANCIAL PROGRAM DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN ZAIRE AS FORCE FOR STABILITY IN CENTRAL AFRICA. HE WARNED THAT, IF ZAIRE FAILS TO REGAIN ITS ECONOMIC STABILITY, IT RISKS PROVOKING INTERNAL DISORDERS AGAINST WHICH THE MOST SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS WILL BE OF NO AVAIL. AT THE SAME TIME, FRANCE RECOGNIZES THAT ZAIRE NEEDS A "SHIELD" TO STRENGTHEN ITSELF PSYCHOLOGICALLY AND MILITARILY AGAINST THE UNKNOWN FUTURE

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OF AN IDEOLOGICALLY ALIEN ANGOLA ON ITS BORDERS. SO FAR AS ACTUAL THREAT TO ZAIRE IS CONCERNED, HOWEVER, FRENCH DO NOT SEE ANY IMMINENT DANGER OF AGRESSION AND SHARE OUR VIEW THAT GREATEST IMMEDIATE DANGER TO MOBUTU IS LIKELIHOOD OF DOMESTIC DISORDER GROWING OUT OF ECONOMIC MISMANAGEMENT. BUT FOR THE PRESENT, INTERNAL SITUATION APPEARS FAIRLY STABLE.

3. WE MUST BE CAREFUL, DE LA ROCHERE CONTENDED, NOT TO SUPPLY ZAIRE WITH TOO MUCH MILITARY EQUIPMENT THEREBY PROVIDING ANGOLA WITH ADDED EXCUSE TO RETAIN CUBAN PRESENCE. HE IMPLIED FRANCE IS ALSO CONCERNED THAT EXCESSIVE MILITARY BUILD-UP IN ZAIRE WOULD ENCOURAGE FRANCOPHONE NEIGHBORS TO SEEK MORE SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT, AND NOTED TENDENCY FOR ZAIRE TO THROW ITS WEIGHT AROUND.

4. STRESS PLACED BY U.S. DELEGATION CHIEF ON IMPORTANCE OF COMBINING ADEQUATE TRAINING WITH THE PROVISION OF EQUIPMENT STRUCK A MOST RESPONSIVE CHORD
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IN GENERAL DUVAL. HE REPEATEDLY RETURNED TO THE THEME THAT MAJOR PROBLEM OF MILITARY AID TO ZAIRE IS HUMAN

ONE, I.E., IDENTIFYING AND TRAINING COMPETENT PERSONNEL AND HOLDING ON TO THEM ONCE THEY HAVE BEEN TRAINED. BOTH GENERAL AND DE LA ROCHERE MADE NO EFFORT TO DEFEND EITHER MIRAGE OR PANHARD PROGRAMS. IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT FRENCH AID OFFICIALS FELT THEY WERE VICTIMS OF POLITICAL DECISIONS OVER WHICH THEY HAD NO CONTROL. MIRAGE PROGRAM WAS PURELY COMMERCIAL VENTURE WHICH FELL INTO GENERAL DUVAL'S LAP BECAUSE ZAIRE COULD NOT FUND FOLLOW-ON SUPPORT CONTRACT. THEY STATED FRANKLY THAT MIRAGE PROGRAM IS NOT ONE TO BE REPEATED IN COUNTRY LIKE ZAIRE. PRESIDENT GISCARD ALSO AGREED IN MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MOBUTU TO REHABILITATE IMMOBILIZED PANHARD ARMORED CARS AT TIME WHEN MOBUTU WAS VERY CONCERNED OVER ANGOLA CRISIS.

5. GENERAL DUVAL OUTLINED IN SOME DETAIL STATUS OF FRENCH ACTIVITY IN ZAIRE, WITH STRESS ON MIRAGE AND PANHARD PROGRAMS. SALIENT DETAILS FOLLOW:

A. MIRAGE

-- COMMERCIAL SALE OF 17 MIRAGE AIRCRAFT: 14 HAVE BEEN DELIVERED AND ARE LOCATED AT KINSHASA, 3 ARE STILL IN FRANCE BEING UTILIZED IN CONNECTION WITH PILOT TRAINING PROGRAM.

-- OF 14 IN ZAIRE, MAJORITY ARE IN BAD CONDITION AND ONLY OPERATIVE FOR SHORT TRAINING FLIGHTS.

-- NONE OF AIRCRAFT HAVE ARMAMENTS.

-- ZAIRE HAS 6 TRAINED MIRAGE PILOTS, OF WHICH 3 ARE RATED OF HIGH QUALITY.

-- FRENCH GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO SEND 16 OFFICERS AND NCOS TO ZAIRE TO ASSIST WITH THE MIRAGE

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PROGRAM; HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE CONDITION OF THE MIRAGES AND KAMINA AIRBASE, ONLY 8 (5 OFFICERS AND 3 NCOS) ARE CURRENTLY IN COUNTRY.

-- BETWEEN 100 AND 150 ZAIRE MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE SCHEDULED TO RECEIVE FRENCH GOVERNMENT SPONSORED TRAINING IN CONNECTION WITH MIRAGE PROGRAM, BUT GOZ PAYS FOR PILOT TRAINING.

B. PANHARD

-- THE GOZ ORIGINALLY PURCHASED 250 PANHARD ARMORED CARS, OF WHICH APPROXIMATELY 50 WERE LOST IN ANGOLA. BECAUSE OF INADEQUATE MAINTENANCE ANOTHER 40

ARE UNACCOUNTED FOR, SOME OF WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN CANNIBALIZED FOR SUPPORT PURPOSES. OF REMAINING APPROXIMATELY 160 PANHARDS, ONLY SOME 34 WERE OPERATIONAL FOR THE 12 DECEMBER INDEPENDENCE DAY PARADE.

-- IN RESPONSE TO A PERSONAL REQUEST FROM PRESIDENT MOBUTU TO PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING AT THE HEIGHT OF ANGOLA CONFLICT, FRENCH GOVERNMENT SENT FIVE ARMY PERSONNEL TO ZAIRE TO ASSIST WITH PANHARD PROGRAM.

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GOZ REQUESTED FRENCH ASSISTANCE FOR "REMISE EN ETAT", BUT FRENCH INSISTED ON PACKAGE THAT INCLUDED TRAINING. FRENCH MILITARY PERSONNEL ARRIVED IN ZAIRE IN JULY 1976 AND BEGAN WORK IN SEPTEMBER; THEY ARE CURRENTLY SCHEDULED TO STAY TWO YEARS, BUT THE FRENCH REPS ANTICIPATED THEY WILL BE REQUIRED TO REMAIN FOR A LONGER PERIOD.

-- THE FRENCH SAID SOME OF ZAIRIAN MECHANICS WERE DOING GOOD WORK, BUT IN GENERAL THEY ARE ENCOUNTERING GREAT DIFFICULTIES WITH PANHARD TRAINING PROGRAM, ESPECIALLY FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL. FRENCH AT ONE TIME ENVISAGED SENDING AN INTACT MILITARY UNIT TO ZAIRE TO

TRAIN ZAIRIAN PANHARD UNIT, BUT RELUCTANTLY CONCLUDED THE ZAIRIANS COULD NOT KEEP UP WITH THIS TYPE OF PROGRAM. CURRENT TRAINING IS CONDUCTED WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF LOOSELY ORGANIZED ZAIRE PANHARD BATTALION. FRENCH GOAL IS TO ESTABLISH AN OPERATIONAL BATTALION AND THEN LEAVE OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE TASKS TO FAZ. IN LIGHT OF CONTINUING DIFFICULTIES WITH TRAINING, CONFIDENTIAL

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FRENCH ACKNOWLEDGED THEIR GOAL IS FAR FROM BEING ACCOMPLISHED.

6. IN ADDITION TO MIRAGE AND PANHARD PROGRAMS, FRENCH HAVE SOLD ENTAC ANTI-TANK MISSILE SYSTEM TO GOZ. THEY ARE TRAINING ZAIRIANS IN HANDLING MISSILES WHICH THEY PLAN TO INSTALL ON JEEPS, WHENEVER ZAIRE DELIVERS THEM TO FRENCH. (PRESUMABLY, THEY ARE AMONG 200 U.S. JEEPS SOLD ZAIRE.)

7. GOZ HAS ALSO 3 ALLOUETTE HELICOPTERS AND 5 PUMAS (ONE DISABLED). IT PLANS TO ARM SOME FOR ANTI-TANK PURPOSES WITH MISSILES (SS-11?). THE GOZ IS EXPERIENCING PROBLEMS IN OPERATING THE HELICOPTERS AND HAS REQUESTED ADDITIONAL HELICOPTER PILOT TRAINING. FRENCH INDICATED THEY WOULD RESPOND FAVORABLY TO GOZ REQUEST.

8. FRENCH RETURNED REPEATEDLY TO DEARTH OF TRAINED PERSONNEL AND PERSONNEL QUALIFIED TO BE TRAINED. THEY ADDED THAT IN FISCAL YEAR 1975/76 SOME 48 ZAIRIAN MILITARY PERSONNEL RECEIVED TRAINING IN FRANCE; IN FISCAL YEAR 1976/77 SOME 96 WILL RECEIVE TRAINING. LIST OF COURSES WITH NAMES OF TRAINEES SHOWED THEY COVERED WIDE RANGE OF MILITARY DISCIPLINES. FRANCE PAYS FOR ABOVE TRAINEES WITHIN ITS "COOPERATION" BUDGET.

9. WHILE FRENCH DESCRIBED TRAINING AS SUPER-HUMAN EFFORT, THEY INDICATED SOME SUCCESS. 34 PANHARDS WERE PUT IN WORKING ORDER AND DRIVEN BY ZAIRIANS 500 KILOMETERS TO AND FROM KINSHASA FOR NATIONAL DAY PARADE. FIVE MIRAGES ARE ALSO SCHEDULED TO BE FLOWN BY ZAIRIAN PILOTS TO TOGO FOR NATIONAL DAY FLY-BY (FRENCH MECHANICS, HOWEVER, WILL BE FLOWN TO TOGO).

10. COORDINATION AND DIVISION OF LABOR
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A. UPON LEARNING OF U.S. INTENTIONS TO HELP FAZ ORGANIZE ARMORED CAR CAVALRY SQUADRON EQUIPPED WITH V-150 COMMANDO VEHICLES, FRENCH EXPRESSED ALARM THAT GOZ WOULD SHIFT PANHARD TRAINED PERSONNEL TO U.S. PROGRAM. DUVAL AGREED WITH ARGUMENT THAT COMPETITION WAS INEVITABLE IF PROVISION WAS NOT MADE TO TRAIN SUFFICIENT PERSONNEL TO SUPPLY NEEDS OF BOTH FRENCH AND U.S. PROGRAMS. HE AGREED WITH UTILITY OF BELGIAN FORMULA THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO "FORMER LES FORMATEURS". FRENCH SAID NO FAZ PERSONNEL ARE RECEIVING ARMOR TRAINING IN FRANCE AND IN FACT IN FY 76 GOZ DID NOT ACCEPT OFFERED ARMOR TRAINING SLOTS. GENERAL DUVAL AGREED TO INSTRUCT COL. GRAS, CHIEF FRENCH MISSION AND LT.COLONEL BARDET, CHIEF PANHARD PROGRAM TO REVIEW WITH ZAMISH POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING ARMORED SCHOOL IN ZAIRE TO MEET NEEDS OF BOTH U.S. AND FRENCH PROGRAMS.

B. WE WERE LESS SUCCESSFUL IN PERSUADING FRENCH TO GO BEYOND THEIR PRESENT EFFORT IN OTHER AREAS. DESPITE PRIVATE HINT BY COLONEL QUIQUENEL THAT WE SHOULD PUSH ON KAMINA AIRBASE QUESTION, GENERAL DUVAL WAS FIRM IN HIS INSISTANCE THAT FRANCE COULD NOT GET INTO INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS UNDER ITS AID PROGRAM AS MATTER OF PRINCIPLE. IT WENT FAR BEYOND POSSIBILITIES OF MILITARY AID BUDGET AND WOULD RUN INTO STIFF PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION IF TREATED AS ECONOMIC

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ASSISTANCE. FRENCH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MIRAGES DID VERY LITTLE FLYING AT THEIR PRESENT KINSHASA AIRBASE BUT THEY COULD NOT BE TRANSFERRED TO KAMINA UNTIL ZAIRE TOOK NECESSARY STEPS TO REPAIR RUNWAY AND WATER SYSTEM AND PROVIDE HOUSING FOR FRENCH PERSONNEL. THEY IMPLIED THEY DID NOT OBJECT TO HAVING POOR CONDITION OF KAMINA AS EXCUSE TO SLOW DOWN MIRAGE PROGRAM TO PACE IN LINE WITH ZAIRIAN CAPABILITIES.

C. IN MATTER OF RADAR, FRENCH AGREED IN PRINCIPLE THAT THEY SHOULD PROVIDE EQUIPMENT FOR AREA CONTROL LINKED WITH THEIR MIRAGES. THEY MADE VERY CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT IT WAS TOTALLY PREMATURE TO BEGIN THINKING IN TERMS OF PROVIDING ANYTHING SO SOPHISTICATED AS RADAR.

D. WHILE FRENCH ARE TRAINING TWO NAVAL OFFICERS IN FRANCE, THEY SHOWED NO INTEREST IN PROVIDING SMALL PATROL VESSELS FOR COASTAL, LAKE AND RIVER USE.

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11. DE LA ROCHERE AGREED THAT ZAIRIANS SHOULD BE BRIEFED IN SOME DETAIL REGARDING THESE DISCUSSIONS. HE THOUGHT THAT PERHAPS MOST APPROPRIATE WAY TO DESCRIBE TALKS WAS "HARMONIZATION" OF OUR TWO PROGRAMS, BUT SAID, HE DID NOT WANT TO DECIDE AT MEETING ON PRECISE LANGUAGE. HE PROMISED TO BE IN TOUCH WITH EMBASSY IN NEXT FEW DAYS WITH SOME SUGGESTED LANGUAGE. (COMMENT: EMBASSY POLOFF WHO WAS PRESENT DURING TALKS SPECULATED THAT DE LA ROCHERE WISHED TO CONSULT NOT ONLY WITH HIS CHIEF, AMBASSADOR GEORGY, BUT ALSO WITH ELYSEE, IN VIEW OF IMPENDING VISIT OF PRESIDENT MOBUTU.)

12. THIS IS JOINT-STATE DEFENSE MESSAGE.
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